

HOLDING FAST THE FAITH

NO. 2007

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 5, 1888,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write: These things says He which has the sharp sword with two edges; I know your works, and where you dwell, even where Satan's seat is: and you hold fast My name, and have not denied My faith."
Revelation 2:12, 13.*

YOUR attention will be principally asked to these words—"You hold fast My name, and have not denied My faith."

Specially note, dear friends, at the opening of this morning's meditation, the character under which the Lord Jesus Christ presents Himself to the church at Pergamos. "These things says He which has the sharp sword with two edges." Does the Lord Jesus come to His church in that way? Does He at the door of the church bear a sword? A sword unscabbarded? A sharp sword? A sharp sword with two edges? Yes, even to His visible church this is how our Lord Jesus Christ appears. To His own spiritual and faithful ones He is to each one a husband, full of unutterable tenderness and love, but to the visible church, which at its best estate is never altogether pure, He appears in severer form. To a church He comes as Captain of the Lord's host, and He wields a sharp sword with two edges. It is the parallel of that passage where John the Baptist says of Him, "His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and He will gather His wheat into His garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." That winnowing fan is never out of His hand, for it is always needed. Even though our Lord is full of grace, He is also full of truth. His love to His servants manifests itself in a burning jealousy which will not endure evil. "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." We think of the coming of our Lord as a joy and a blessing, but, oh, remember that question, "But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears?" The Lord bears the sword, and He bears it not in vain. Time has not blunted its edge, it is "sharp," and it has two edges, as of old.

But what will He do with that sword in reference to a church? We are not left in any doubt upon that point. Having mentioned some whose doctrines and lives were unclean, the Lord says, "Repent; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth." He turns the sword against those within the church who had no right to be there. It is no trifling thing to be a church member. I could earnestly wish that certain professors had never been members of a church at all, for if they had been outside the church, they might have been in far less peril than they are within its bounds. Outside their conduct might have been tolerated, but it is not consistent with an avowal of discipleship towards Jesus. I say this with deep sorrow. O false professors, you may go down to hell readily enough without increasing your damnation by coming into Christ's church with a lie in your right hand. Alas for those who are not Christians in heart, and yet profess to be so! Such ought to be startled by the vision of the Lord Himself drawing near to a church with a sharp sword in His hand. Surely, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites."

Yet is there comfort to the sincere in this glorious man of war. He will smite those who are the enemies of His holy cause, but He will also beat off those who attack His people from without. His sword is for the defense of the faithful. It is drawn from its sheath to protect the timid and the trembling. Jesus is come as our Joshua, to chase the enemy before us, and lead us onward, conquering and to conquer. The sword with two edges is the defender of the least of those whose hearts are right before the Lord. I introduce the subject as the Spirit Himself introduces it. I would make the sermon sweet to the saints, but the preface needs to be sharp, lest any seize upon comforts to which they have no right. The Paschal Lamb

is always to be eaten with bitter herbs; those bitter herbs I have set upon the table. The name of Jesus, which is the song of angels and the treasure of saints, has terror in it to those who refuse Him, for He who bears that name shall judge the quick and dead, and pronounce condemnation on the unrighteous.

Notice that this blessed Savior watches His church with an observant eye. He looks at the church in Pergamos, and He says, "I know your works, and where you dwell, even where Satan's seat is." The Lord sees the position and the peril of the church at Pergamos, "where Satan dwells." Probably there were horrible idolatries, with obscene orgies in the city, or it may have been a place of peculiar licentiousness, or of special persecution. We cannot at this distance of time tell exactly what it was, but the Lord regarded it as the citadel of Satan. There are places in the world at this day where sin has so much the upper hand, or where error and unbelief reign so supreme, that the devil would seem to have there taken up his residence, and to have made it his capital city. This is a trying neighborhood for a church of Christ, and yet it is the place where it is most wanted. You, dear friend, may be living in society where the evil one rules with undisputed sway. You are not favored to dwell with your fellow Christians, but you go home to be met with blasphemies at the door, and all the week sights and sounds assail your eyes and ears which make you feel like Lot in Sodom. I am sorry for you, but let it comfort you that your Lord knows all about it, and He can either remove you from the trying position, or else He can still more glorify His grace by supporting you in it, and enabling you to overcome the enemy. He knows that "Satan desires to have you, that he may sift you as wheat," and He prays for you that your faith fail not. He knows your perils, and He considers your trials. Right well He perceives the way in which Satan would first mislead you, and then accuse you. The subtlety of the old serpent He understands. He sees your struggles, your failures, and your desperate endeavors to hold fast the faith. He knows how at night you are grieved as you make confession before Him of your shortcomings, but He knows, also, the peculiar circumstances in which you are placed, and He judges you in great mercy. If you are holding fast His name, and have not denied the faith, even *that* may be to Him a surer proof of your truthfulness of heart than works of labor and patience might be in other instances. You have borne fewer clusters than another vine, but Jesus knows that you grow in a very barren bit of ground, and He thinks well of your little fruit. Your day's work does not look like much when it is done, but when horses plow a rock so hard that it breaks the plowshare, no farmer expects so much to be done as when a light loam has to be gently turned over. The Lord Jesus takes all our surroundings into consideration, and though He loves us too well to make excuse for our sins, yet He Himself mentions the circumstances which make our act to be rather failure than fault, even as He did for the first disciples when He found them asleep, and He said, "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." O dear Children of God, if you are placed in positions of peculiar trial and difficulty, and if your hindrances are so many that you cannot accomplish one-tenth as much as you desire, then hear how Jesus puts it, "I know where you dwell, even where Satan's seat is." If you are faithful to your Lord, and firm in His truth, He will commend you and say, "Yet you hold fast My name, and have not denied My faith." I wonder whether this word of comfort is meant for somebody here, or for some friend who will read the sermon. I feel that it must be so. Many of our Lord's beloved ones are, in God's sight, now doing much more, under distressing circumstances, than they used to do in happier days. When they had ten pounds entrusted to them, they brought in two by way of interest, and now that they have only one pound, they bring in one pound of interest; thus you see that they produce a far larger percentage than they used to do, and this is the Lord's way of calculating, for it is according to righteousness. When we have little strength, and are placed in positions of great difficulty, then the Lord thinks all the more of what we produce, and regards it as all the surer proof of fidelity. In the text it is commendation enough for Pergamos, under the circumstances that, dwelling so close to Beelzebub's own capital, close under the shadow of the throne of hell, that church could earn this praise, "You hold fast My name, and have not denied My faith."

Let us give earnest attention to this commendation. Oh, that we may earn it ourselves, and if we have already earned it, may we be helped by the Holy Spirit to hold it fast, so that no man takes our crown!

I. The first head will be, LET US CONSIDER THIS FACT. I hope it is a fact with many here present as surely as it was a fact with Pergamos. I trust it can be said of this church and of its members—"You hold fast My name, and have not denied My faith."

Notice, dear friends, *that, the name of Christ is here made to be identical with the faith of Christ.* “You hold fast My name, and have not denied My faith.” The faith of Scripture has Christ for its center, Christ for its circumference, and Christ for its substance. The name—that is, the person, the character, the work, the teaching of Christ—this is the faith of Christians. The great doctrines of the gospel are all intimately connected with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; they are the rays, and He is the sun. We never hold the faith correctly except as we see the Lord Jesus to be the center of it. From our election onward to our glorification, Christ is all and in all. To the Jews the law was never in its proper place until it was laid in the ark, and covered with the mercy seat, and I am sure believers never see the law aright till they see it fulfilled in Christ Jesus. If it is so with the law, how much more is it so with the gospel? The gospel is the gold ring, but Christ Jesus is the diamond which is set in it. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith; He is the sum and substance, the top and bottom of it. When we hold fast the name of our Lord, then we have not denied the faith.

But *how may the faith be denied?* In several ways this may be done. Let me say it very tenderly, but very solemnly, some deny the faith, and let go the name of Jesus *by never confessing it.* Remember how the Lord puts this matter in the gospels, “Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God, but he that denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.” Here it is clear that to deny is the same thing as not confessing. I know people who almost boast of their neutrality. They say, “I hold my tongue. Though the conflict should lie between Christ and Belial, yet I would go quietly on and never involve myself.” Is that what you say? Then permit me to remind you of our Lord’s own words. “He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathers not with Me scatters abroad.” Again He says, “Whosoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.” This text must bear hard upon those who have tried not exactly to hold with the hare and run with the hounds, but neither to hold with the hare nor yet to run with the hounds. These have hoped to find in their discretion the better part of valor, but, believe me, it is a valor which will be rewarded with everlasting contempt. This way you hope to lead an easy life. An easy life of such a kind will end in a very uneasy death. A life in which we have shunned the cross of Christ will lead to a state in which we shall miss the crown of glory.

Christ is also denied *by false doctrine.* If we espouse error as to His person, work, or doctrine, and believe what Jesus did not teach, and refuse to believe what Jesus did teach, then we have denied His name and His faith. One of the main points of a Christian, without which the rest of his life will not be acceptable with God, is that Jesus shall be to him “the way, the truth, and the life.” The practical, the doctrinal, the experiential must all be found by us in Jesus Christ our Lord, or else we have not placed Him in His right position, and we cannot be right anywhere unless the center is right, and unless Jesus is that center. God grant that we may never turn aside from the faith once for all delivered to the saints, but may we resist all false philosophies, steadfast and immovable!

But then it is very possible to deny the name and the faith *by unholy living.* Let none of us imagine that an orthodox creed can be of any use to us if we lead a heterodox life. No, Christ Jesus is to be obeyed as a Master, as well as to be believed as a Teacher. The disciple is to be practically obedient, as well as attentively teachable. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” The apostle Paul somewhere says, “He that cares not for his own household has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (or unbeliever)”; so a moral fault may be a denial of the faith, and may make a man worse than if he had never professed to believe at all. God save us from an unholy life!

Alas! We can deny the faith *by actually forsaking it,* and quitting the people of God. Some do so deliberately, and others because the charms of the world overcome them. We are told of some who went away from our Lord because of what He had taught. They cried, “This is a hard saying; who can hear it?” My friends, if you are not prepared to accept hard sayings, you need not profess to be disciples of Jesus. “Horrible doctrine!” cried one the other day. Granted that it is horrible; may it not also be true? Many horrible things take place around us, and yet none can deny the facts. You cannot exclude from your knowledge many things which are true, by merely crying, “Horrible!” It is not ours to judge of our Lord’s teaching by our sentiment; we are to receive it by faith. He speaks terribly of the doom of the wicked, and He is not capable of exaggeration. What the Lord Jesus says is certain, for “He is the faith-

ful and true witness,” and therefore we will not turn from Him, whatever His teaching may be. Oh for grace to persevere to the end! Oh for fidelity and constancy, so that, neither gain nor loss, exaltation nor depression, may induce us to quit our Savior! Let us hold fast His sacred name, and never deny the faith, come what may. May the Holy Spirit hold us fast, that we may hold fast the name of Jesus!

In what way may we be said to hold fast the name of Christ and the faith of Christ? I answer, *by the full consent of our intellect*, yielding up our mind to consider and accept the things which are assuredly believed among us. We hold fast the form of sound words, and accept whatsoever God has revealed, because He has revealed it. Our motto is, “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” When Christ speaks, we assent with our minds and consent with our hearts to all He declares.

If we hold fast the name of Jesus, we must hold the faith *in the love of it*. We must store up in our affections all that our Lord teaches. His words are food, and we do eat them, they are as honey to the taste. Let Jesus speak, and I will reply, “Yes, Lord, You say it is so, and I know it is so. I consent to Your teaching, and from my soul I love You, and accept all that You do reveal.” For the doctrines revealed in Holy Scripture the true believer would live or die. This love of the heart is that which causes us to hold fast the name of Christ.

We also hold it fast *by holding it forth* in the teeth of all opposition. We must confess the faith at all proper times and seasons, and we must never hide our colors. There are times when we must dash to the front and court the encounter, when we see that our Captain’s honor demands it. Let us never be either ashamed or afraid. Our Lord Jesus deserves that we should yield ourselves as willing sacrifices in defense of His faith. Ease, reputation, life itself, must go for the name and faith of Jesus. If in the heat of the battle our good name or our life must be risked to win the victory, then let us say, “In this battle some of us must fall; why should not I? I will take part and lot with my Master, and bear reproach for His sake.” Only brave soldiers are worthy of our great Lord. Those who sneak into the rear, that they may be comfortable, are not worthy of the kingdom. What will our Captain say of cowards in that day when He distributes rewards to all faithful ones? Brethren, we must be willing to bear ridicule for Christ’s sake, even that peculiarly envenomed ridicule which “the cultured” are so apt to pour upon us. We must be willing to be thought great fools for Jesus’ sake. Some of us have forgotten more than many of our opponents ever knew, and yet they style us ignorant; we are bearing shame because we have the courage of our convictions, and yet they call us cowards. For my part, I am willing to be ten thousand fools in one for my dear Lord and Master, and count it to be the highest honor that can be put upon me to be stripped of every honor, and loaded with every censure for the sake of the grand old truth which is written on my very heart. Those ships which sail with Jesus as their Lord High Admiral must look for tempests, for His boat was filled with the waves, and began to sink. Does that man love his Lord who would be willing to see Jesus wearing a crown of thorns, while for himself he craves a chaplet of laurel? Shall Jesus ascend to His throne by the cross, and do we expect to be carried there on the shoulders of applauding crowds? Be not so vain in your imagination. Count the cost, and if you are not willing to bear Christ’s cross, go away to your farm and to your merchandise, and make the most of them, only let me whisper this in your ear, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

II. In the second place, having considered the fact, LET US FURTHER ENLARGE UPON IT.

What do we mean by holding fast the name of Christ? I reply, first, we mean *holding fast the Deity of that name*. We believe in our Lord’s real Godhead. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God.” One of the names by which He is revealed to us is Immanuel. The word “El” is one of the great Oriental names of God. You get in Hebrew Elohim, and in Arabic “Allah.” Our Lord Jesus is Immanu-*el*, that is, God with us, and we believe Him to be so. He is as truly man as anyone among us; born of a virgin without taint of original sin. But He is also most surely God without the least diminishing of the perfections and glories of Godhead. We put our finger into the print of the nails, but as we do so we cry, “My Lord and my God.” “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth; and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” We can never give up our belief in the Godhead of our Lord Jesus, but we must and will hold fast the faith of the Deity of Christ.

We also hold fast the name of Jesus, and the faith of Jesus, *as to the royalty of His name*. He was born King of the Jews, and He is also “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” That which Pilate wrote over His cross is true, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”; but God also has highly exalted Him, and made Him to have dominion over all the works of His hands. The Father has committed all judgment unto the Son. He shall put down all rule, and all authority and power, for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. “The Lord shall reign forever and ever; Hallelujah”! When we bow the knee in prayer, and say, “Your kingdom come,” we mean the kingdom of God, and we mean also the kingdom of Christ Jesus. He it is that as a Lamb is seen in the midst of the throne where saints and angels pay adoring homage. Soon shall the seventh angel sound his trumpet, and great voices shall be heard in heaven saying, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.” O Jesus, we bow before You! “Just and true are Your ways, You King of saints.” He reigns in our hearts over the triple kingdom of our nature. He is King in our families; we desire to see him King in this city, King in this nation, King over all the earth, and we shall never be satisfied till, with all the redeemed of our race, we crown Him Lord of all. We hold fast the royalty of the name of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, we believe in *the grandeur of that name*, as being the first and the last. Open the New Testament, and read the first verse of Matthew. How does it begin? “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David.” The book of the New Covenant begins with Jesus. Now look at the last verse, see how the Testament ends, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” Jesus Christ appears in the first verse, and He appears in the last verse. Did He not say, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end”? The first line of the covenant of grace is Jesus Christ; the last line of the covenant of grace is Jesus Christ, and all in between is the Lord Jesus Christ. Begin with him as A, go right through to B, C, D, E, F, and so on till you end with Z, and it is all Christ Jesus. He is all; yes, He is all in all. Oh what blessings have come to us through Jesus Christ! Through His name we have received remission of sins, in His name we are justified, in His name we are sanctified, in His name we shall be glorified, even as in Him we were chosen from before the foundation of the world. My tongue can never tell you even the commencement of His greatness. Who shall declare His generation? The fringe, the hem of His infinite glories, who can touch? He is unspeakable. As for His glory, I may say, “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! Who has set Your glory above the heavens?” All glory and honor be unto Him in whom are comprehended all the blessings whereby God has enriched His people in time and in eternity.

We hold fast the name of Christ as we believe in its saving power. “You shall call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.” We hold fast the belief that Jesus saves us from the guilt of sin by having borne it in His own body on the tree. We are assured that He makes us just before God by that righteousness of His, which is ours, because we are one with Him. He saves us from the punishment of sin because “the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” He died as a victim in our stead. He saves us from the power of sin by His Spirit, and by faith in His death; we overcome sin by the blood of the Lamb. Salvation in every department, salvation from its hopeful dawning to its glorious noontide in perfection, is all of Christ Jesus. He is Savior and He alone. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” He is the unique Savior; there is no other possible salvation now or in the world to come. Do you believe Christ? Then you have salvation. “But he that believes not shall be damned.” Pronounce the word hard or soft as you will, it will come to the same thing in the end—you shall be condemned, and condemned hopelessly, if you believe not in Jesus Christ, the one sole propitiation for the sins of men. This we hold fast. I know you are established in these truths, my beloved, and you mean to hold them as long as you breathe, and not to deny the faith which the Lord Himself has delivered to you.

Once more, we hold fast this name *in its immutability*. We are told today that this is an age of progress, and therefore we must accept an improved gospel. Every man is to be his own lawyer and every man his own savior. We are getting on in the direction of every man putting away his own sin, just as every chimney should consume its own smoke. But, dear friends, we do not believe these idle dreams.

We want no new gospel, no modern salvation. Our conviction is that Jesus Christ is, “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” The way that Paul went to heaven is good enough for me—

*“The way the holy prophets went,
The road that leads from banishment,”*

is broad enough and safe enough for me. When I remember my dear brethren and sisters in Christ who have fallen asleep, whom I saw die with triumph lighting up their faces, I feel quite content with the salvation which saved them, and I am not going to try experiments or speculations. To talk of improving upon our perfect Savior is to insult Him. He is God’s propitiation; what would you want more? My blood boils with indignation at the idea of improving the gospel. There is but one Savior, and that one Savior is the same forever. His doctrine is the same in every age, and is not yes and no. What a strange result we should obtain in the general assembly of heaven if some were saved by the gospel of the first century, and others by the gospel of the second, and others by the gospel of the seventeenth, and others by the gospel of the nineteenth century! We should need a different song of praise for the clients of these various periods, and the mingled chorus would be rather to the glory of man’s culture than to the praise of the one Lord. No such mottled heaven, and no such discordant song, shall ever be produced. There is one church and one Savior. We believe in one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. To eternal glory there is but one way; to walk therein we must hold fast one truth, and be quickened by one life. We stand fast by the unaltered, unalterable, eternal name of Jesus Christ our Lord. This is what we mean by holding fast the name and the faith of Jesus.

III. Thirdly, dear friends, to lead you a step further in the same road, LET ME SHOW THE PRACTICAL PLACE OF THE NAME AND OF THE FAITH WITH US.

The practical place of it is this: first of all, *it is our personal comfort—*

*“Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
It is music in the sinner’s ears,
It is life, and health, and peace.”*

The faith which we hold is our daily and hourly joy and hope. The doctrines which I believe in connection with the divine Person in whom I trust are the pillow of my weariness, the relief of my care, the rest of my spirit. Jesus gives me a lookout for years to come which is celestial, and at the same time I can look back with thankfulness on the years which are past. For all time the Lord Jesus is our heart’s content. Nothing can separate us from His love, and therefore nothing can deprive us of our confident hope. Through this blessed name and this blessed faith believers are themselves made glad and strong. On the name of Jesus we feed, and in that name we wrap ourselves. It is strength for our weakness, yes, life for our death.

And then, dear friends, this name, this faith, these are *our message*. Our only business here below is to cry, “Behold the Lamb.” Are any of you sent of God with any other message? It cannot be. The one message which God has given to His people to proclaim is salvation through the Lamb—salvation by the blood of Jesus. It is by His blood that cleansing comes to the polluted. He is the one great Propitiation. To tell of Jesus is our occupation, we have nothing to say which is not comprised in the revelation made to us by God in Christ Jesus. He who is our one comfort is also our one theme.

He also is *our divine authority* for holy work. We preach the gospel in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. If we preached it in any other name men would have a right to reject it. If the spiritually sick are healed, it is His name which makes them strong. If devils flee before us, we cast them out in His name. Oh, that we did more often remember that all our teaching and preaching must be done in the name of Jesus! In His name we gather for worship, in His name we go forth to service. If we go in our own name we go in vain, but if we are ambassadors for God, as though He did beseech men by us, then we pray them in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God, and we are hopeful that our labor will not be in vain in the Lord.

This also is *our power* in preaching, indeed, it is our power, our only power in living before God. Brethren, the devil will never be cast out by any other name—let us hold it fast. If we conjure by eloquence, talent, music, or what not, the evil one will say, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?” It is only His name that makes the legions of hell quit the bosoms of the possessed, and fly howl-

ing down into the deep. This is the name high over all; but there is none other which has such power in it. Spiritual diseases, yes, death itself, will yield to this name. It is His name that makes Lazarus come forth from the grave, and the young man sit upright on the bier. Use this name, and nothing can stand before you.

I said that it is our power in life, and so, indeed, it is. When we draw near to God, what is our strength wherewith to prevail *in prayer*? Is it not that we ask in the name of Jesus? If you leave out the name of Jesus, what are your prayers but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal? Prayer without the name of Jesus has no wings with which to fly up to God. This is that golden ladder whereby we climb up to the throne of God, and take unspeakably precious things out of the hand of the Eternal. That name prevails with God concerning everything, and so enables us to prevail with man; wherefore, hold it fast, and deny not the faith, for what can you do if the truth and the name of Jesus are given up?

This name is our one *hope of victory*. As Constantine, in his dream, saw the cross, and took it for his emblem, with the motto, "By this sign I conquer," so today our only hope of victory for the gospel is that the cross of Christ displays it, and the name of Jesus is in it. His name is named on us, and in His name we will cast out devils, and do many mighty works, till His name shall be known and honored wherever the sun pursues its course, or the moon cheers the watches of the night.

III. Now, in closing, I will URGE REASONS FOR HOLDING FAST THE NAME AND FAITH OF JESUS. I hope we hold it so fast that we can never give it up while reason holds its throne. There is an old Christian legend concerning Ignatius, that, he never spoke without mentioning the name of Jesus whom he loved. His speech seemed saturated with love to his Lord, and when he died the name of Jesus was found to be stamped on his heart. It may not have been so literally, but no doubt it was true spiritually. The name of Jesus is, I hope, written in our hearts so as to be inseparable from our lives. Whatever else may go, the name of Jesus can never depart from our thoughts. Dying men have been known to forget everything but this. The man has forgotten his wife, his children, his bosom friend, and has turned away oblivious from them all, as if they were strangers, and yet when the name of Jesus has been whispered in his ear, his eyes have brightened, and his countenance has responded to that precious name. O memory, leave no other name than His recorded upon your tablets! Happy forgetfulness which clears all else away, but leaves that name in solitary glory!

That it may be so I will put the question thus: *Why should we give up the faith?* I fail to see a reason. Why should I change my belief, or cease to hold fast the name of Christ Jesus my Lord? It is an irrational suggestion. "I am open to conviction," said a man who knew his ground, "I am open to conviction, but I should like to see the man that could convince me." I am in very much the same condition with regard to the gospel of my Lord Jesus; I am open to conviction, but I shall never see the man that can convince me out of my experience, my conviction, my consciousness, my hope, my all. Before I could quit my faith in the substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and my confidence in the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, I should have to be ground to powder, and every separate atom transformed.

What would they give us in exchange for the faith? That is a question which it is easy to ask, but impossible to answer. Suppose the doctrines of grace could be obliterated, and our hope could be taken away, what would they give us in the place of them, either for this life or the next? I have never seen anything proposed in the place of the gospel that was worth considering for a second. Have you? Uncertainty, doubt, glitter, mockery, darkness—all these; but who wants them? They offer us either bubbles or filth, according to the different shade of the speculator's character, but we are not enamored of either. We prefer gold to dross.

We must defend the faith, for *what would have become of us if our fathers had not maintained it?* If confessors, reformers, martyrs, and covenanters had been unfaithful to the name and faith of Jesus, where would have been the churches of today? Must we not play the man as they did? If we do not, are we not censuring our fathers? It is very pretty, is it not, to read of Luther and his brave deeds? Of course, everybody admires Luther! Yes, yes, but you do not want anyone else to do the same today. When you go to the Zoological Gardens you all admire the bear, but how would you like a bear at home, or a bear wandering loose about the street? You tell me that it would be unbearable, and no doubt you are right.

So, we admire a man who was firm in the faith, say four hundred years ago; the past ages are a sort of bear-pit or iron cage for him, but such a man today is a nuisance, and must be put down. Call him a narrow-minded bigot, or give him a worse name if you can think of one. Yet imagine that in those ages past, Luther, Zwingle, Calvin, and their compeers had said, "The world is out of order, but if we try to set it right we shall only make a great row, and get ourselves into disgrace. Let us go to our chambers, put on our night-caps, and sleep over the bad times, and perhaps when we wake up things will have grown better." Such conduct on their part would have entailed upon us a heritage of error. Age after age would have gone down into the infernal deeps, and the infectious bogs of error would have swallowed all. These men loved the faith and the name of Jesus too well to see them trampled on. Note what we owe them, and let us pay to our sons the debt we owe our fathers. It is today as it was in the Reformers' days. Decision is needed. Here is the day for the man, where is the man for the day? We who have had the gospel passed to us by martyr's hands dare not trifle with it, nor sit by and hear it denied by traitors, who pretend to love it, but inwardly abhor every line of it. The faith I hold bears upon it marks of the blood of my ancestors. Shall I deny their faith, for which they left their native land to sojourn here? Shall we cast away the treasure which was handed to us through the bars of prisons, or came to us charred with the flames of Smithfield? Personally, when my bones have been tortured with rheumatism, I have remembered Job Spurgeon, doubtless of my own stock, who in Chelmsford Jail was allowed a chair, because he could not lie down by reason of rheumatic pain. That Quaker's broad-brim overshadows my brow. Perhaps I inherited his rheumatism, but that I do not regret if I have his stubborn faith, which will not let me yield a syllable of the truth of God. When I think of how others have suffered for the faith, a little scorn or unkindness seems a mere trifle, not worthy of mention. An ancestry of lovers of the faith ought to be a great plea with us to abide by the Lord God of our fathers, and the faith in which they lived. As for me, I must hold the old gospel; I can do no other. God helping me, I will endure the consequences of what men think my obstinacy.

Look you, sirs, *there are ages yet to come*. If the Lord does not speedily appear, there will come another generation, and another, and all these generations will be tainted and injured if we are not faithful to God and to His truth today. We have come to a turning point in the road. If we turn to the right, maybe our children and our children's children will go that way, but if we turn to the left, generations yet unborn will curse our names for having been unfaithful to God and to His Word. I charge you, not only by your ancestry, but by your posterity, that you seek to win the commendation of your Master, that though you dwell where Satan's seat is, you yet hold fast His name, and do not deny His faith. God grant us faithfulness, for the sake of the souls around us! How is the world to be saved if the church is false to her Lord? How are we to lift the masses if our fulcrum is removed? If our gospel is uncertain, what remains but increasing misery and despair? Stand fast, my beloved, in the name of God! I, your brother in Christ, entreat you to abide in the truth. Quit yourselves like men, be strong. The Lord sustain you for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—REVELATION 2:1-17

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—422, 390, 409

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